

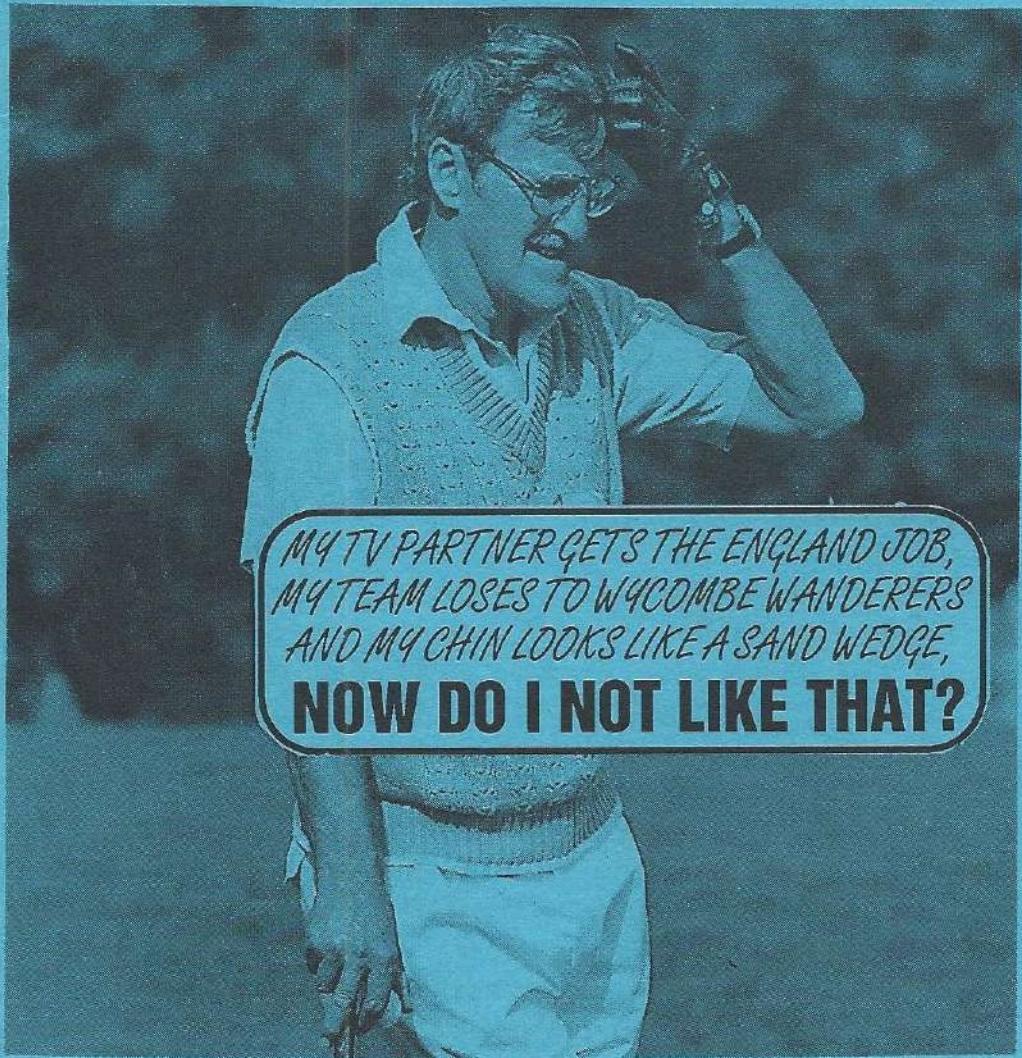
THE ADAMS FAMILY



ISSUE 13....

MARCH 94....

50p....



MY TV PARTNER GETS THE ENGLAND JOB,
MY TEAM LOSES TO WYCOMBE WANDERERS
AND MY CHIN LOOKS LIKE A SAND WEDGE,

NOW DO I NOT LIKE THAT?

WYCOMBE WANDERERS FANZINE

THE ADAMS FAMILY

PO BOX 394, HIGH WYCOMBE
BUCKS, HP13 6HT.

We are sure that you will all be aware by now of the dispute between ourselves and Mr. John Goldsworthy over our "Behind the fanzine scene" article in issue twelve. Whilst not wanting to be drawn into a slanging match over something so inconsequential, we feel we must make a few points clear.

Mr. Goldsworthy has pulled his page three article from the matchday programme because he believes that our article makes it "paramountly obvious" that the fervent supporters of WWFC do not wish to see it in the programme.

We at TAF cannot see how he has derived this message from our article. We thought, when deciding to publish it, that it would be seen as nothing more than a friendly leg-pull, not an all out affront to his persona. Also, why has Mr. Goldsworthy decreed that TAF is the voice of the supporters. "The Adams Family" obviously has supporters writing for it, but then so does the programme. Never in TAF has anyone professed to speak FOR the fans, we like to think that individual supporters are capable of that themselves.

We know that not everybody will find our attempts at humour to their liking, after all one man's sarcasm is another man's satire. When deciding which articles to include we can only run them by our own "taste chip". If

an article is not to your liking then come and have a word with us whilst we are selling this fanzine, failing that write to us and tell us why you think we've been out of order.

In issue six one of our writers, rather unfairly we later realised, took the shortcomings of the youth and capital league sides to task in the article "Flackwell Farce". The aggrieved party that time was Mr. Jim Melvin, who duly wrote to us, invited us to the ground for a chat, and made us realise that we were in fact way off the mark with our musings; naturally we pointed this out in our next issue. The three of us present that day had a lot of respect for Jim at the end of our meeting, and we like to think that we earned a bit of his by admitting we were wrong.

Contrast his gentlemanly behaviour to the arrogant and downright ridiculous missives of Mr. Goldsworthy and programme editor Adrian Wood, who seem to think the way to deal with us is to use the power of their publication to batter us into line with their way of doing things. For this reason, and the fact we still believe the article was funny and inoffensive, TAF will not give the apology that Mr. Wood demands in his pompous letter. After all that we feel that this piece should end on a rather lighter note, so we quote from Mr. Wood's letter to us.....

"I doubt if I can persuade him (Goldsworthy) to write again; people will see that their favourite article is missing; programme sales will go down; the club will lose money - is that what you really want?"

Now that really is humour, isn't it ?

CONTRIBUTORS: Andy Dickinson, Dave Chapman,
Jon Dickinson, Doug Peters, Neil Peters.....

TAF IS AVAILABLE FROM... Wycombe Wines,
Crendon Street, High Wycombe; WWFC Corner Flag
shop, and our PO Box, address above (50p + sae).

GET YOUR FISTS OUT FOR THE LADS

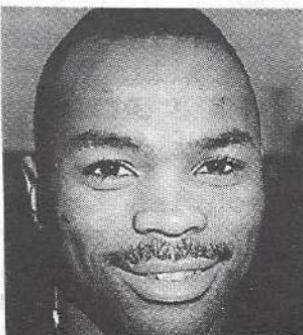
Since the turn of 1994, something has been lacking in Wycombe performances, something that I imagine has given even the eternal optimist, Martin O'Neill, a few sleepless nights. A lot of people have said that it all seems to have stemmed since the departure of goal King Keith Scott, although I don't think that this is the sole reason. I personally put it down to a lack of passion. There seem to be players who are earning a decent crust and giving us, the fans, very little to cheer about football wise. Indeed it is here where the main argument lies. Let's face it WWFC have had a cracking season so far: Cup performances have been superb, and the Wembley dream is once again a possible reality. The league position too, is excellent. The performances, however, have not been eye-pleasing of late. I can only think of one excuse for this and that is that the majority of pitches are turning into genuine bogs, making first-class football hard to play. However I don't think this is the real problem. I believe that there are certain players who just aren't playing up to scratch, players who should take a leaf out of their managers book when it comes to passion. It is not my place to say "who", that is Martins' in the privacy of the dressing room, but when all we hear are people moaning about the lack of atmosphere in Adams Park (Paul Franklyn/Alan Parry) then it's time to look into the nature of this and ask "why?".

As a fan, I am of the opinion that the team should lift the fans. After all we pay good money to hopefully see good football and see our team win. Failing that, even crap football and three points will be suffice to send us into Saturday evening utopia. We also want to feel part of the game, cheer at our favourite players and abuse the ref, etc.

If things aren't going well I agree that the tendency amongst fans is to go quiet and/or moan and shout. This can be rectified by the players. All it needs is one of our boys to look into the crowd with a fist raised, or to mouth theatrically "come on", whilst flapping their hands in an upwards motion. We will respond.

I know because I've seen it work down the years. O'Neill has done it, Mark West used to do it, and Glyn Creaser is a master at it. It works because it rouses great passion in the fans, and although it isn't an essential quality for a budding footballer it is certainly a useful one. Terry Evans, Jason Cousins, Hakan Hayrettin, Paul Hyde : These are the fiery, passionate players who the fans love, and the players who I believe can turn things around. Let's face it Matt Crossley, Steve Guppy and Dave Carroll may be great players, but as characters they're passive, hence the need for motivators when things aren't going our way. Also when we score a goal, let's celebrate, for a good celebrator can also lift the supporters. Kerr, Hemmings, Hayrettin and Cousins are the top men in this department, each knowing how to celebrate with a modicum of style. O'Neill too is a veritable Jack-In-The-Box, the proverbial rabid dog let off his leash, every time a goal is scored. This too is precious to see, and the sort of thing that cheers the terrace punter.

Anyway that's the players guide to winning over the fans (although I forgot to mention that talent helps also), so now it's up to us to respond. Yes, I know it's hard when we're so used to winning, and suddenly we're losing 1-0 to The Wigan Piers and the ball seems intent on causing further damage to the ozone layer, but remember Peter Suddaby. Remember Joe Blochel. Remember Kevin Day, Josh Price, Graham Pearce....the list is indeed endless. Things aren't half as bad as they seem at the moment. Let's get behind the boys and keep moving on up.



Kerry, Aky, Hemmo....Boys With Style

JOIN THE CLUB

A few new faces have joined Martin's band of merry men since the last issue of TAF, please give a warm Adams Park greeting to.....

Lee Turnbul: Signed from Doncaster for 20,000 Lee started well in his debut against Northampton by taking out an opponent with about 6 seconds on the clock. He had a promising first game. Hitting the post and bringing a good save out of the Northampton keeper with two well directed headers. Unfortunately, although he tries hard he hasn't really justified his 20k transfer fee. I don't think he looks like a goalscorer, more of a midfield hard man, in fact, he doesn't seem to know where the "onion bag" is but only time will tell.

Steve Brown: The ex-Northampton captain is Wycombe's record signing at a total cost of 70,000. When I heard we had signed him I thought that was a decent buy. He had stood out in both our games against Northampton as a useful player. He has yet to weave a fine tapestry for the Blues. He looked pretty ineffective against Mansfield and Wigan but then again the whole team had off days for those two games so maybe that's excusable. We all know that Martin wouldn't throw that sort of money around on a donkey and I'm sure Steve will soon become a big hit with the fans.

Simon Garner: This experienced old pro (copyright John Motson) made his debut in the enthralling cup tie at Fulham. He looked a class above everyone else on the pitch. He holds the ball up and shields it magnificently (when it is played to his feet) and has an awesome shot. Simon isn't the world's fastest player and I get the impression that maybe he plays well when the whole team does and disappears when things are not going so well. However, he is a proven goalscorer (copyright John Motson again) and it is a testament to Wycombe's prestige that we can sign a player of his standing even if he was free. I'm sure plenty of second division clubs

would like to have him but he's ours and long may he reign.

Steve Blatherwick: On loan from Forest, Steve looked like he was going to be a good (though temporary) replacement for Terry "Chief" Evans. Unfortunately it seems that he will be spending most of his loan period serving suspensions. Let's hope that while he is here he can do a good job.

Ryan Giggs: Yes, it surprised me too when I heard that young Ryan had been kicked out of Man Utd for smoking but their loss is our gain. I'm sure this young man will eventually fulfil his promise (personally I'd rather we had Matt Hanlan back in the squad) and help us onwards and upwards. I'd like to know how we funded the transfer value but it's probably best not to ask.

TERRACE TATTOO

What on earth is happening here? After eleven proud issues on page three, I find my column shunted off halfway down page seven. I've told my esteemed editor, that it simply isn't good enough to have the most popular article in this fanzine midway down page four, thankfully he assures me that pride of place returns today.

Anyway there are vastly more important crisis' to talk about than where my column appears, (hard to believe, I know) namely our team losing THREE matches on the 'spin' (whatever that means). I was casting my mind back to the civic reception after the trophy final, where everyone thought that Martin O'Neill was on his way to Forest. However, that didn't stop most of the gathered throng indulging in a bit of grovelling towards him in the vain hope that he might stay. Of course he did and everyone was astounded at his loyalty to this club. I also recall him saying, somewhat tongue in cheek, that we'd all be calling for his head if we were in the bottom half next season. Whilst it hasn't reached that point yet, the old whiners are growing in numbers week by week, and

although no-one has yet had the balls to shout " Martin out" things like, "Well he bought the players, so maybe you've got to ask questions" have been heard.

Clearly no-one was happy at the performances given at Mansfield and at home to Wigan. Both were completely gutless displays, with no footballing skill to talk off whatsoever. I know it's not constructive to boo the players off the field, but sometimes when you see feeble performances following each other you feel as if you have to get it through to someone that it isn't acceptable.

However that's where I personally draw the line. In my view it's not on to be jeering and abusing during the game and it's well out of order to scream and rant at certain individuals. Imagine you've just started a new job at a big company, you'd be looking forward to it, but you'd probably be a bit apprehensive until you'd learnt that particular companies way of doing things. Imagine after a few days that the customers of that company came round and called you "shit" and "A bloody waste of money". Imagine that, and you may then realise what certain sections of our support are doing to Steve Brown, if that is what you think then save it until you get home. Thankfully, the atmosphere at Gillingham yesterday was a little more upbeat. The first half was pretty dire stuff, but the second was a vast improvement on recent league fare, even Dave Carroll put some crosses into the box !!! I would have been quite satisfied going home with a 0-0, by virtue of the passionate second half performance, but there's nothing finer than a last minute winner, especially when it comes in outrageous circumstances.

Quite what the defender and goalkeeper were thinking of is beyond me, but then I have often asked the same question about Peter Shilton and Dave Needham's antics in the League cup final between Forest and Wolves. I was a bit of a Forest fan in my glory hunting youth and the sight of those two lying on the floor as Andy Gray

smugly ran round the side of them, laughing and waving BEFORE he'd even knocked the ball home..... Sorry my anger got the better of me there, I have real trouble watching footy on SKY Sports solely because of that incident. Anyway, it was the delightful Mr. Langford who cast himself in the Andy Gray mould and capped a fine performance with a goal he truly deserved. Should Tim ever go on to analyse for SKY then expect a big drop in the number of dishes in the Gillingham area.

Continuing the air of triumph, lets talk about the Fulham game. However I made a far from triumphant entrance, around half an hour late after a nightmare journey from Gatwick airport. I'd like to claim that I had flown in specially for the match from my Austrian mountain retreat, and enter myself for one of those ego-masseaging long distance supporter awards, but it simply wouldn't be true. Therefore, when the game went into extra-time I was well chuffed, because one hour of football seems a bit short, especially when you've been had over by a thieving cockney git on the turnstile (I got charged a tenner to stand on the terrace). I think we all could have done without penalties, especially the moment where Mr. continental style missed his, but the end result was just (but then I missed the first half) .

Finally there may be many things we don't understand like why is Steve Guppy playing left back; why has Lee Turnbull gone from promising to "Aylott Alert" status in one month; where is Hakan Hayrettin and how does The Holy Man retain his first team place. We don't know the whole picture so we should trust the man who does, and after all the success of recent years, isn't that the least we can do.

Away Day Comment: "Where's the pitch, where's the pitch, where's the pitch ????".....

"Muddy Awful", said the inventive Lincoln Echo on Saturday January 15th, commenting on the Imps' second half display against the Blues. Too "muddy" right mate, those who could kick the ball the furthest and stay on their feet were always going to be the winners on a day when Wycombe showed uncompromising, mud-wrestling-like determination second half, having failed to create a single chance in the first 45. In addition, we had lost make-shift striker Steve Thommo very early on and had gone down to a 13th minute goal scored by a teenage sprog on his debut. Oh dear.

Doubtless the BFP were warming up with "BROWN AND OUT", or something equally hideous at that point, but two inspired substitutes' performances from Timmy Langford and Andy Kerr gave Wycombe a slightly flattering winning margin on the day. "Bonnie" terrorised the Lincoln back four almost at will as the second half progressed, gleaning a brace for his efforts and looking more and more like a stunted Richard Gere with a bottle of Grecian, every time I see him. Andy Kerr meanwhile was brought on for schizo Cousins second half, after our Jase suffered a rare injury. Andy himself showed poise in defence and set up Big Chief Evans' stooping header for 3-1, rising above the Lincoln keeper to divert Guppy's sweet cross towards the Blues Red Indian captain.

I seem to recall comment being passed a couple of issues back on the plastic pitch at Preston. Give me that any day over the Sincil Bank mire. It started off looking like a badly ploughed field and got worse, young Steve Guppy in particular, struggled to control the ball down the channels - how he wished he were at Anfield so that John Motson could have rescued him through benefit of the "Barnes Bobble" syndrome.

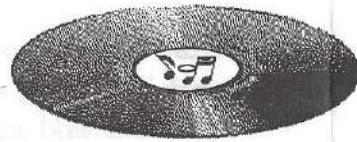
Whilst Wycombe - for my money at least - have rarely played as well this season as last (admittedly against better opposition), we

certainly seem to be stronger mentally and have acquired a useful knack of picking up points when needed. Despite the unfavourable conditions and some clueless officials (So what's new?) Wycombe showed a gritty resolve, not always evident, to pick up a fine three points. As for the Lincoln quagmire - ever thought of a plastic pitch lads???? I hear there's one up for sale.....



**Richard Gere performs on a more
pleasing playing surface.....**

SOUNDS OF THE STARS:-

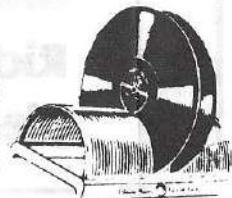


In the last issue of TAF we took you on a musical journey through the beautiful countryside of "Football Pop". We are now going to show how Wycombe Wanderers are not just a hit on the pitch but also on the dance floors of Britain's clubs.

Back in the Loakes Park years our pre-match and half-time entertainment was provided by a young musical genius who went on to become the Hacienda's top DJ. He is now living in America producing for the likes of Prince, U2 and Primal Scream. His play list, although by no means extensive, was carefully selected to provide a musical feast to whet your appetites for the forthcoming entertainment on the pitch. I actually know a group of lads who used to go to Loakes Park not to watch the football but to listen to their favourite DJ. The Dambusters is now pretty much the Wanderers anthem. In the 80's Andrew Lloyd Webber was called in to write appropriate lyrics. The Lloyd Webber version can now be heard on the terraces at every Wycombe game.

Anyone with a trained musical ear who saw Bristol City V Liverpool or Wolves V Ipswich on Match Of The Day would have heard a classic SKA track wafting over the airwaves. The track was The Liquidator I don't know who did it but I do know that our friend the Loakes Park DJ introduced it to the Footballing public. Every home game at about 2:45 as I walked up past the Hospital End I could hear The Liquidator above the cacophony of sound emanating from the Gasworks End terrace. This track was sampled by Bassomatic on Fascinating Rythmn. Who produced that record? I hear you ask, yes, our friend the Loakes Park DJ.

The Blues always used to run out to the same music, Colour Box's World Cup Theme. Many away sides had the fear of God put into them on hearing such a piece. In fact, I'm amazed it



took us so long to win promotion with an anthem like that.

The move to Adams Park though successful in most ways was a disaster musically. Firstly we had a new DJ. secondly, the PA system was awful (thankfully that has now been sorted out). Apparently Wycombe enter the field to the crashing sound of Waterfront by Simple Minds. I've never heard it as the PA announcer (he is no longer a DJ) is too busy talking over it about the match sponsor.

Some ill informed being decided that "Simply The Best" would be a good logo for our merchandise and the song of the same name would panic the opposition much in the same way that Wagner's "Flight Of The Valkyrie" was used in Vietnam. Sadly they were wrong. Very wrong. Tina Turner was, is and always will be crap (and no, she does not have fine pins). So many people use the Simply The Best logo that you could be supporting Chris Eubank, World Of Leather, or even a Bridge Street Kebab Van wearing a tee-shirt with that emblazoned across your chest. Thankfully the club have got the message and both the song and logo have been dropped.

Only one moment of musical glory stands out in my mind. One cold winters eve I was huddling at the back of the main stand during half time in a Capital League game when the tear-jerking and let's face it, pretty spooky, "Camouflage" by Stan Ridgeway came over the PA. For the duration of the song I wasn't at Adams Park I was a brave Marine hiding from the Viet-Cong in South East Asia, marvellous.

With the Club's success in the FA Trophy came the chance the players had been waiting for. Every player dreams of reaching a Wembley Final. Not so that they can play at the twin towers but so they can record a cup final song. Who knows, if Michael Jackson hadn't put a block on Alan Parry's masterful version of the Wanderer we would have seen the likes of Westy, Johnny Granville and Sir Matthew Crossley shaking their thang on Top Of The Pops. The B-Side, "Wycombe

"Wanderers We Are The Best" could have got a decent chart placing if Radio 1 hadn't refused it airplay on the grounds of taste.

The second Trophy Final produced a more convincing victory and a more convincing song. With MC John Reardon and Jimmy Jim Melvin at the mixing desk the Blues recorded, in only one take, the greatest football song ever, "The Wanderers Medley". Sadly the team only ever gave one performance of this song. On the Town Hall balcony the day after the final. What an emotionally charged performance it was to. People have said it was better the Pavarotti in the Park, or even Octavia, the ostrich from Pitkins, in the park (personally I can't believe that).

One incident marred our promotion to the football league.

Billy Gallacher's (AKA Billy Bonqua) version of "Wycombe, Wycombe Wanderers" sung to the tune of Dion's "Runaround Sue". I was stood near the Altringham fans whilst he was singing that and boy was I embarrassed. Some of the Alty supporters were actually crying with laughter, shame on you Billy. If we ever win promotion again someone tell Mike Phillips to hide the microphone.

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REVIEW: BLUES NEWS

My first thoughts when I heard about the proposed launch of 'Blues News', was that here would be the first serious competitive threat to The Adams Family (not of course including the pitiful sham that was 'Roo-barb Roo-barb' RIP). However, further investigation revealed that it was to be issued bi-weekly free with the BFP, no additional purchase required.

A fine idea in essence and first inspection of it looked promising, but for those of you who have not / could not be bothered to cast your eyes across it, what is it like and is it likely to survive?? Front cover was top notch - a large photo of Terry 'The Chief' Evans about to lose the ball to Norwich's Chris Sutton (sums that game up in a nutshell), and inside were several other interesting piccys that I'd not seen before, including on the back a colour snap of Terry Evans losing the ball to Norwich's Chris Sutton....hmm, nuff said there.

Inside the 16 page journal, we were confronted with a mixture of various articles written by a wide array of scribes, and 6 pages worth of adverts, which you can't complain about as it is free! The written content made pleasant reading over your Friday morning muesli and included contributions from such doyens of journalistic brilliance as directors Parry ("Why Wycombe?") and Peart ("Half-Time Report"), and playing staff including 'The Boss' ("View From The Bench"), 'The Chief' ("Captain's Log" - no sniggering please you saddoes) and Jim 'Batman' Melvin's youth team report.

Also on display were various rantings from sundry 'personalities' connected with the club, like Mark Austin, Adrian Wood and course Mr. Beeks himself. "Field Of Dreams" was an interesting reflection on the season so far from a fan's point of view, but the article which brought me most mirth was undoubtedly "Clippings" by our aptly named groundsman, Jim Gardner.

Surely it is scraping the proverbial barrel a bit, getting the

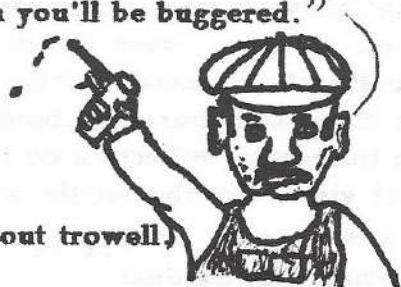
geezer who prepares the pitch to bamboozle us with such technical info as, "It takes 3 hours to roll the pitch, I use a Ransome's Mastiff 36 Cylinder Mower and walk around 6 miles...". As with many other of the articles in Blues News unfortunately, "Clippings" will last 3 issues at best I would imagine, and then we shall start to see a much slimmer rag, or failing that one with more ads in. Besides, does anyone really care what he does? He can use his wife's mother to roll the pitch flat with for all I'm concerned, as long as we've got a half decent surface to play on come Saturday afternoon.

Don't get me wrong, I'm sure he does an A1 job, but are there many, nay any, budding groundsmen who could give a badger's navel about how to "get the seed germinating early" before planting it?? If so, spare poor Jim the further embarrassment of having to pen "Clippings" each fortnight, and get on down to the Centre Spot (where he spends far too much time by all accounts) so you can compare fertilizers in person.

Alternatively, follow the sound advice given by the TAF groundsman (employed exclusively for our summer soccer season), who each issue will give you punters some practical tips which you can apply to your gardens and herbaceous borders. I mean how many of you own a footy pitch, anyway? Collect all of these for a quick reference guide to treasure and keep.....

Groundsman's Tips No. 1

"Always use a good quality oil, cos like as not, the wheel on your barra will seize up'n you'll be buggered."



(Next issue: Where to buy a stout trowell.)

FANTASY FOOTBALL

Fantasy football has got to be one of the largest audience participation games around. It's not a completely new idea, but this season it has become so hugely popular that even national newspapers are joining in. The best addition to the craze has got to be the BBC 2 show Fantasy Football (Friday 11.30ish pm). Hosted by comedians, David Baddiel and Frank Skinner, it's really just a replica of a Saturday night in the pub discussing God's own game. Each week the show plays host to two guests who are fantasy managers of a fantasy football team. Their teams are made up of Premiership players whom they have bought at a fantasy sale. Adding up how many points your players earned your team by whether they scored, assisted in a goal or managed to keep a clean sheet, goes towards your league position. You can only have three players from one team, apart from that, you can buy who you want. Back to the show, a couple of weeks ago the great Basil Brush appeared as a guest, only to unveil his team which included Swindon's Mr Keith Scott. Strangely enough the managers that seem to be the worst at this game are those with what is supposed to be an incredible knowledge of the game. Hovering in the lower regions of the league, is TV's own John Motson, commentator extraordinaire, with an immense amount of football trivia and facts. This goes to prove that we, the ordinary public, can be good football managers. How many times have you heard a manager saying "It's easy to be a Monday Morning Manager, the country is full of them", well thanks to Fantasy Football the country is overflowing with them, and we all seem to be doing a very good job. So Martin, I'm free at 2 O'clock Monday, Have your cheque book ready and I'll take you shopping for the league.

DIARY



Half-time vs Wigan Athletic was for sure a sorry spectacle, and I think that the general opinion is that this contest that has been trundled out throughout the last year, has become truly stale. However I am being positive and prompting Wycombe to perhaps have a look at what Fulham achieved in the recent Autoglass game. For those who weren't there, basically there were two teams, one boys/one girls, who would alternate running from the centre-spot, dribbling past two cones, before shooting at the opposing keeper. Imagine getting 20 teams or so having a knockout competition throughout the season. Dedicate half a page of programme space to it, to keep the interest flowing, and watch the various mums, dads, aunties, uncles etc. flowing through the turnstiles. Mike "alright" Phillips would be the ideal host, hamming it up with the kids, and that steward behind the goal who looks like "tricky dicky" from 'Eastenders' could fuel his ego by picking up the cones afterwards. Most of all the kids would love it. A chance to score a goal from open play at Adams Park.....I'd have willingly given my right "knacker" for the privilege.

I see that Alan Parry wants a ruddy orchestra behind the goal at home games. Oh dear...can you honestly think of anything worse than some loon blowing "The Yellow Rose Of Texas" in your ear for a full 90 minutes? Sheer hell I'd imagine. Picture the scene if you will: We're 2-0 down at home to someone like Hereford. Do you (A) Sing your heart out to the music from the KFC advert (B) Swear death to all trumpeters or (C) Shout "bloody hell Guppy," ??? Mostly B's and the odd "C" I would imagine. So it's clear; anyone wishing to blow a bugle should contact their local Salvation Army where they can find a use for their "talents".

Talking of Alan Parry, decent chap despite the above, it was good to see him and Chairman Ivor Beeks walking across the pitch at Craven Cottage the other week. Fists raised, and receiving a warm reception, Ivor suddenly came over all passionate and threw his £30 tweed cap into the crowd. Little did he know that this would-be collectors item was promptly tossed back to him, only for some greasy Fulham steward to pocket it. Nice gesture all the same Ivor.

Still getting space in TAF, and rightly so, is oily furniture mogul Tom Fitzgerald. He seems to delight in waiting until an unaware fan has parked outside his shack, before sticking his head out of the door and smugly going, "No - I don't think so". He got his comeuppance however at the home match vs Northampton, when one of their fans replied, unknowingly, "keep your hair on mate". A red faced Tom was seen quickly retreating, for once lost for words.....

A belated diary entry comes in for the "award for the most poorly informed programme of the season". Walsall's New Years Day effort was appalling. Whether the editor was suffering from festive excesses, a trifle myopic, or unable to understand Adrian Wood's writing we'll never know. However in the scope of one double page our ground was referred to as "Arms Park", Tim Langford was supposed to have arrived from Telford this season, and two pictures of Keith Ryan were printed, one of whom we are assured is Steve Guppy...er, it isn't. However the finest gaff of all, was that Nicky Evans has signed for a second spell with us from Barnet (50,000 plus a free knee specialist and coiffeur), and indeed scored the equaliser against Torquay. It looks like the BFF were a bit slow on picking that one up..... keep those snippets coming in.

CHARACTER DEFICIENCY

Football is today suffering from what I believe to be a major personality crisis, namely, it hasn't got any. I wouldn't say that the footballing profession has been abundantly blessed with them in the past, but top soccer players of years gone by seemed to have more character, more 'star' status if you will. Before you all scream "Gazza" at this article, I'm afraid that pulling faces, getting razzed and belching on TV, certainly makes you a bit of a rogue - it does not however qualify you for a personality award, though.

The reason for this trend seems to be twofold - firstly, soccer has become far too money orientated and thus less fun than it used to be, and secondly, footballers today appear to be as thick as pigs' dung, I'm afraid. Why it is the case that soccer players' IQ is on a par with their boot size, and seemingly way in arrears of goals tally if you're Alan Shearer, I'm not quite sure.

Shearer, whilst being a brilliant player, is a classic example of a dim stereotyped soccer star. Commentators must literally dread having to interview him pre- or post-match, as trying to get interesting conversation out of him is like trying to get a straight answer out of John Major.

A recent Sportsnight feature on the Premiership's leading marksman managed to squeeze little out of him but a handful of well-worn cliches about the team's performance being more important than his own, and that he wouldn't be anything without his colleagues...."I just stick 'em in the back of the net, me...". He also went on at great length about his secret pre-match meal of "Chicken and beans, chicken and beans..." ad infinitum, as though he'd just discovered how to split the atom.

He isn't soccer's only culprit by any means. I could draw up an endless list if needed (Robson, Beardaley etc.), but two folk of particular note are both involved with Aston Villa; Guy Whittingham strings together whole lists of cliches to form sentences, and his boss Big Ron, certainly an astute judge of soccer, loves chipping in post-match with "Early doors", "Swings and roundabouts" and (not) doing things

"For the full 90 minutes" whenever possible. Need I go on? What's really worrying is that the players of today will eventually become the managers of tomorrow. Certainly Kev Keegan, Ray Wilkins and Glen Hoddle (of former eras) seem capable coaches and leaders, but I fail to see how someone like Glenn Roeder can 'manage' a football club like Watford - he appears to have the personality of an amoeba whenever I've seen him on the box.

Exceptions to today's worrying trend seem rare apart from Tranmere's Pat Nevin who is a lover of fine alternative music and has appeared on a TV arts quiz (true fact).

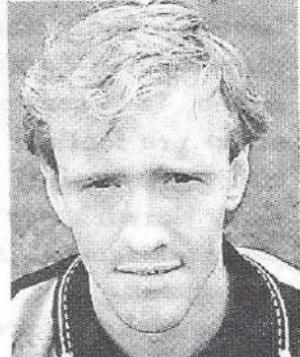
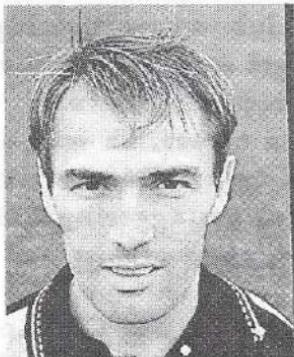
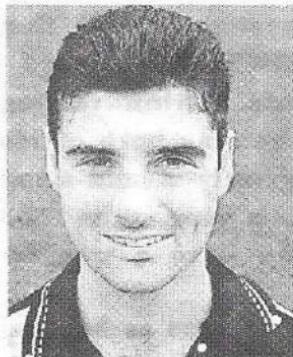
Could anyone for instance supply me with the name of a footballer in MENSA, or one with a degree, or even A-Levels?? Sadly the club apprenticeship system means that players often do not get a full education. BBC2's "Reportage - Guide To Careers" recently featured Chris Sutton talking about pro football as a career, as well as showing both of his cup goals against us (gits). Despite being only a mid-sized club, Norwich pay him a staggering £100k. a year, plus £500 per goal scored. Add sponsorship and you have a wealthy young man.

A fine bloke he probably is, but Chris came across as being a tad thick on TV and when asked about advice for kids wanting to be pro soccer stars of tomorrow, Chris replied, "Well, just keep plugging away at school and you'll hopefully get spotted like I was to go on a club YTS scheme. Oh yeah, join a local club if you can too." Come on Chris, be specific - a bridge club, a Rotary Club, lacrosse club??

It would appear that a sizeable proportion of many big footballer's wages go on paying for an agent, who perform such valuable services like showing him where to sign a contract and what colour car to drive (if indeed he can drive). This got me thinking about the Wycombe team at present - are the Blues a collection of intellectual paupers or do we have a selection of Einsteins on board? Somewhere inbetween I would imagine - listening to the players talking on videos and on the Blues Line is somewhat deceiving as London accents (which many players possess) always make you sound more

illiterate than you are e.g. Dave Carroll, Terry Evans, Paul Hyde, Simon Stapleton. Steve Thompson always comes across as being a bit deranged when his west country lilt and nutty expression come out, and Tim Langford's Brummie accent always brings a smile when he goes on about Ringing The Blues paying for his gambling habit, an affliction which seems to affect various other members of the squad. Oh well, at least they must be good at maths then.

The truth about Wycombe players may soon be revealed in an exclusive set of player profiles to be published in future issues - watch this space closely.

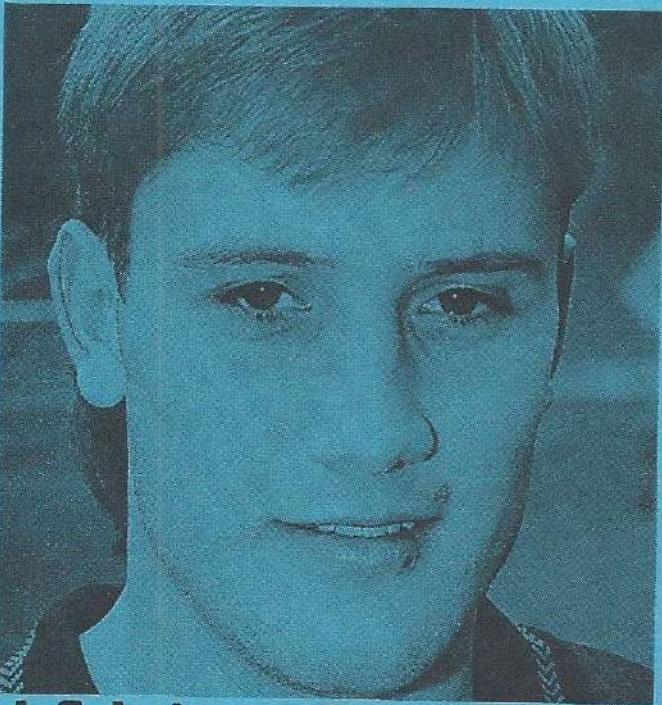


COUSINS: Cockney 'spiv supreme
CARROLL: The original Dick Van Dyke
THOMMO: Scrumpy-drinking Cornishman

Black Football Fans! - the last untold story.

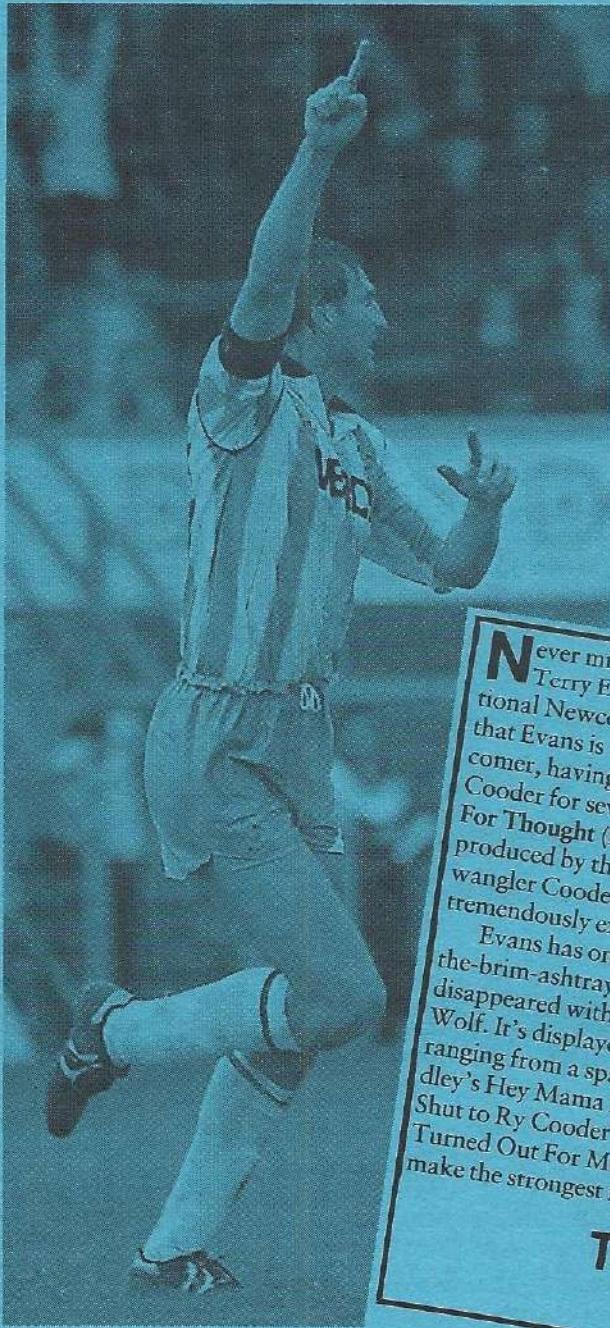
Race Equality Officer/FSA member wants to interview ethnic minority supporters of all clubs for book on your experiences. Confidentiality respected: J Tummon, MCCR, Peter House, 2-14 Oxford Street, Manchester M1 5AG.

BOAT RACE



He definitely needs one. Watford's mutant midfielder Craig Ramage, in need of some Bonjela lip-salve.

Gazza wore one, Mabbutt looks great in his, so surley there can be a wider use for the face mask than to protect a player's damaged cheek. The mask is light weight and easy to wear and there's a lot more players I would like see with this new piece of football fashion strapped across their boat race. Martin Keown springs to mind, along side Ronnie Rossenthal and Mick Quinn. I'm sure the Football Association could market these masks to great profit. The game would become a lot more accessible to those of a nervous disposition or children who just can't look at the likes of Peter Beardsley without screaming all the way home. Come on, I'm sure this is a great new invention for the world leaders in plastic technology, 3M.



And you thought he was injured

Never mind, because maybe next year Terry Evans will win a Best International Newcomer award, or something. Not that Evans is what you would call a newcomer, having done backing vocals for Ry Cooder for several million years, but Blues For Thought (Pointblank, VPBCD 16) — produced by the veteran American guitar-wangler Cooder — is his first LP and it is tremendously excellent indeed.

Evans has one of those grunty, full-to-the-brim-ashtray voices that one imagines disappeared with the death of Howlin' Wolf. It's displayed to full effect in songs ranging from a spanking version of Bo Diddley's Hey Mama Keep Your Big Mouth Shut to Ry Cooder's That's The Way Love Turned Out For Me, a ballad guaranteed to make the strongest man turn to the Kleenex.

Tom Hibbert
NIGHT & DAY